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United Nations
International Drug Control Programme
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information letter

Testing Labs Contribute To Drug Abuse Control

A trainee from Sudan running a preliminary colour test on a drug sample during a course at the UNDCP narcotics laboratory *(See p.8)*

In Memoriam

John Michael Mantle Huins

(See text on page 2)

Commission to Examine Drug Control Situation Worldwide

Most aspects of international drug abuse control will be considered by delegates attending the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, to be held from 13 to 22 April 1994 at the Vienna International Centre.

In particular, the 53-member Commission is expected to review the world drug situation, and examine progress made in the implementation of existing international drug control treaties as well as the Global Programme of Action and the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control.

Also on the agenda of the Commission are strategies and activities to reduce illicit demand for drugs as well as cooperation between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Secretariat. In addition, the Commission is expected to discuss the 1993 Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) before submitting it to the Economic and Social Council.

Sub-Commission Opposes Legalization

"Let us make this clear from the outset: the world ought to know that we, in the Near and Middle East, are against the legalization of the non-medical use of drugs". This statement was made *in unison* by drug law enforcement officials gathered at a UNDCP-sponsored regional meeting held from 21 to 25 March 1994 at Damascus.

The thirtieth session of the Sub-Commission on Illicit Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, which was inaugurated by the Syrian Interior Minister, opined that the decriminalization or legalization of possession of drugs under international control would have a negative impact on worldwide drug control action. In particular, it would adversely affect efforts by Governments in the region that were currently paying a high cost in combating the illicit cultivation of opium poppy.

The meeting recalled commendable efforts made by Lebanon to eradicate illicit opium cultivation in the Bekaa Valley, calling on other States to follow suit. Participants were informed that poor weather conditions during the current season might result in a reduction of illicit opium harvest in Pakistan.

Discussions revealed an upward trend concerning cannabis abuse and traffic in several countries of the region. Countermeasures enforced by countries such as

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Workshop Calls for Stricter Precursor Control

Concern over the diversion of precursors and essential chemicals from international trade into illicit markets brought together officials from nine countries and one territory to a Workshop on Precursor Control in South-East Asia, held from 21 to 25 February 1994 at Bangkok. The Workshop was the first of two to be conducted by the International Narcotics Control Board and UNDCP as part of a regional precursor control project for countries of Asia and the Pacific. The purpose of the Workshop was to establish working mechanisms to prevent diversion in the region. Such mechanisms would focus on the controls over the licit trade of acetic anhydride, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which are used in the illicit manufacture of heroin and methamphetamine.

The Workshop urged all countries of the region to introduce or strengthen control measures over the manufacture and distribution of these substances. Concern was expressed particularly about the operations of brokers and the routing of consignments through major ports of transit and transshipment, as well as free trade ports and free trade zones.

Stressing the need for establishing strict controls over the import and export of substances used in the illicit manufacture of drugs in the region, the Workshop outlined a series of elements deemed essential for an effective control system, including the licensing or registration of import and export operators, the application of the guidelines disseminated by UNDCP, the establishment of a monitoring system to assist in the identification of suspicious transactions and the exchange of information between countries of the region.

Now that the first workshop has been completed, a pilot project will be undertaken in one of the countries of the region in the context of a comprehensive technical assistance programme to give effect to control measures provided for in article 12 of the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Attending were officials from China, Hong Kong, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Also present were observers from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the European Union and local representatives of individual Governments and international organizations.

Sub-Commission Opposes ...

from page 1

Lebanon and Syria had yielded positive results, with a significant reduction of cannabis resin in the region. Illicit traffic of morphine base and particularly heroin in the region has become a major concern. States in the Sub-Commission region accounted for 80 per cent of heroin seized in 1993 on its way to Western Europe through the Balkan route. Seizures of cocaine were reported in five States of the region. Fenetylline continued to cause particular concern in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf.

As regards the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the meeting requested UNDCP to prepare an article-by-article questionnaire to be circulated to members of the Sub-Commission in order to gauge the status of implementation of that Convention in the region.

Syrian Vice-Minister of the Interior, General Ahmad Sae'ed Saleh, was elected Chairman. Other officers were: I.M. Mohsin (Pakistan) and Darwish Abraheem Fagiha (Saudi Arabia), Vice-Chairmen, and Abdulah Salim Al-Ali (Qatar), Rapporteur.

Attending the Sub-Commission's session were representatives of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, India, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Also present were observers from seven States outside the region, five intergovernmental bodies, three specialized agencies and one drug control organ.

The report of the Sub-Commission will be submitted to its parent body, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Section Chief Dies at 57

It is with profound sadness that UNDCP announces the passing away on 14 March 1994 at Oxford of John Michael Mantle Huins (United Kingdom), Chief of the Suppression of Illicit Traffic Section of UNDCP, after a long and painful illness.

Mr. Huins joined the United Nations Division of Narcotic Drugs in December 1989, following a distinguished career with the British New Scotland Yard.

After taking a degree in Law at Brasenose College, Oxford, he served in the Metropolitan Police Force and the Royal Marines and rose through the ranks to reach the level of Deputy Assistant Commissioner.

He also served for three-and-a-half years as Head of the Drugs Sub-Division of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol).

Born on 18 March 1937 at Handsworth (United Kingdom), Mr. Huins is survived by his wife and four daughters.

UNDCP extends its deepest condolences to the family of this distinguished staff member who devoted several years of his life to the cause of international drug abuse control.

The name of an INCB member, M.V.N. Rao, was inadvertently omitted in the photo caption published on page 2 of the January 1994 issue of the *Information Letter*.

READEX
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News in brief ..... News in brief ..... News in brief .....

Official visits

During an official visit to Japan, UNDCP Executive Director, Giorgio Giacomelli, met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tsutomu Hata, on 18 January in Tokyo.

The Foreign Minister pledged his Government's commitment to increasing its political and financial support to UNDCP. In February 1994, UNDCP was informed of an increase of Japan's voluntary contribution from US$ 4.5 million in 1993 to US$ 5.5 million in 1994.

While in Tokyo, the Executive Director signed an agreement with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Drug Abuse and Prevention Centre.
(See page 6).

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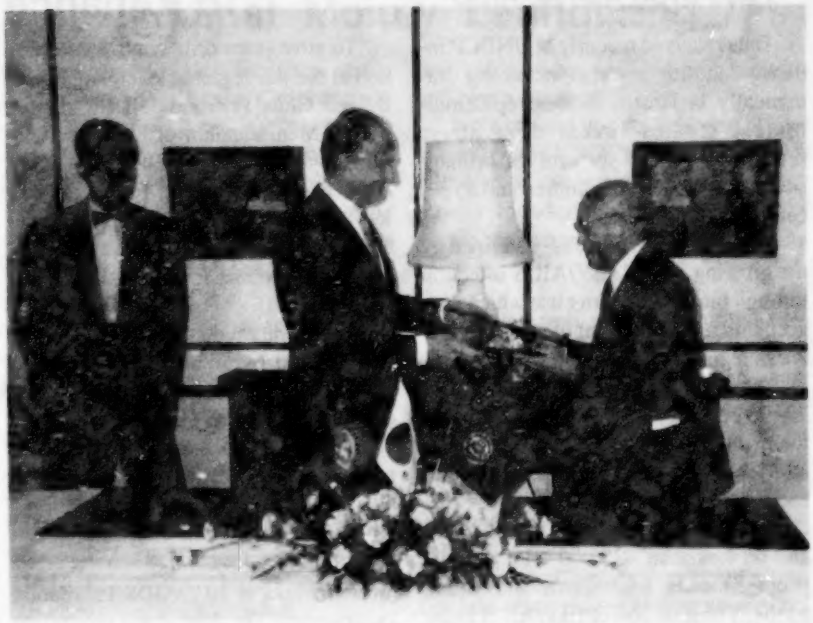
From 23 January to 7 February 1994, Deputy Executive Director and Director of the Division for Operational Activities, Gerd Merrem, toured five Asian States for consultations with government officials and field staff on future directions for UNDCP programmes.

He also held talks with heads of United Nations agencies or entities concerning the United Nations system-wide drug abuse control activities at the country level. The visits were undertaken in India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The results of these talks include the involvement of UNICEF in UNDCP alternative development projects along the China/Myanmar border beginning in 1994, enhanced inter-agency collaboration in Viet Nam, particularly with UNICEF and UNDP, the inclusion of drug control issues in various UNICEF training programmes as well as in its booklet "Facts of life" featuring its maternal and child health activities.

Also UNDCP is to participate in UNDP-sponsored inter-agency/donor sub-working groups on the social and economic development of ethnic minorities.



UNDCP Executive Director, Giorgio Giacomelli, exchanging a signed agreement with Masami Takatsuji (right), Chairman of the Board of Directors of Tokyo-based Drug Abuse Prevention Centre, on 21 January 1994.

Country Directors' Annual Seminar Held

Country Directors and Directors of UNDCP Regional Offices participated in a seminar on their expanded role from 9 to 16 February 1994 at Vienna.

In his remarks, the Executive Director recalled major events leading to the establishment of UNDCP in 1991 as the focal point for global drug control. He noted that the views expressed by Member States at General Assembly high-level plenary meetings in October 1993 pointed to an acknowledgement of the need to translate political will into action.

In the aftermath of the newly signed UNDCP/UNDP working arrangement, he continued, the Country Directors' role had expanded with their involvement in matters relating to INCB concerns, resource mobilization, public information, coordination of activities, etc.

Special presentations were made by senior staff of UNDCP and the Head of the Personnel Service, United Nations Office at Vienna. The seminar, conducted with the assistance of a special consultant stressed, among other things, the need to establish practical linkages among UNDCP programmes and bilateral aid donors as well as technical consultations with other UN agencies in the field.

Participants also discussed inter-agency cooperation, drug control master plans, coordination of activities at the country and regional levels as well as intensification of fund-raising initiatives. Emphasis was further placed on administrative matters.

UNDCP currently has 17 Field Offices located in Barbados (Regional Field Office for the Caribbean), Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire (Regional Field Office for West Africa), Ecuador, Gabon (Regional Field Office for Central Africa), India (Regional Field Office for South Asia), Kenya (Regional Field Office for East Africa), the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico (Sub-regional Office for Mexico and Central America), Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan (Regional Field Office for South-West Asia), Peru, Thailand (Regional Centre for South-East Asia) and Uzbekistan (Regional Field Office for Central Asia).

Brazil Street Children Face Drug Abuse, AIDS

Data received recently at UNDCP indicate that drug abuse is increasing dramatically in Brazil. Recent epidemiological studies reveal drug abuse prevalences of 3.5 per cent for primary and secondary school children and 55 per cent for street children.

Authorities are especially alarmed by the growing rate of HIV/AIDS infection through intravenous drug use which now accounts for 29 per cent of all new HIV/AIDS registered cases nation-wide (it was at 2.7 per cent between 1980 and 1986). The 29 per cent national average obscures the fact that rates are far higher in major cities such as Santos (42 per cent). Brazil had 35,704 registered AIDS cases (the third highest worldwide) in March 1993, and no less than 425,000 HIV-positive people, mostly adolescents and young adults. The total cost of HIV/AIDS to the country is estimated at US$ 3.5 billion.

In March 1994, UNDCP successfully completed the development of a drug abuse prevention programme which will become a component of the US$ 250 million National HIV/AIDS Prevention Programme. The drug abuse prevention component (US$ 9.1 million), to be financed mainly by the Government, aims at educating the intravenous drug abusers about the high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Four Andean Countries To Enhance Cooperation

To strengthen drug control cooperation at the sub-regional level, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru and UNDCP adopted a draft Memorandum of Understanding for Sub-regional Cooperation at a meeting of experts held, from 1 to 3 February 1994 at La Paz. The final document will be signed at Vienna during the 37th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in April 1994.

The Memorandum of Understanding is supported by an action agenda, also elaborated at the sub-regional meeting of experts, calling for joint programmes commencing in mid-1994 in drug abuse prevention, control of illicit traffic and alternative development.

Demand reduction cooperation will focus on the development of harmonized drug abuse information systems, training and evaluation programmes. To curb illicit traffic, the signatory States will concentrate on selected law enforcement training programmes as well as on technical cooperation in the areas of customs control, data gathering, money laundering and precursors control.

The emphasis is placed not only on using expertise and facilities already available in the signatory countries but also on governments mobilizing the technical and financial inputs of regional organizations such as the Inter-American Commission for Drug Abuse Control and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Attending the La Paz meeting were 19 technical and government experts representing relevant ministries and national drug control commissions.

The expert meeting concluded a series of exploratory consultations initiated in May 1993 by the Executive Director with the Permanent Representatives of the four countries in both New York and Vienna.

A view of the inaugural ceremony of the Meeting of Experts on Sub-regional Drug Control Cooperation presided over by Mario Soliz Valenzuela (centre), Secretary of Social Defense in the Bolivian Ministry of the Interior, at the Cancillería de La Paz on 1 February 1994.

Legal Workshop Urges Cooperation

To assist countries of the "Golden Triangle" (Laos, Myanmar and Thailand) and bordering States to cooperate more effectively in detecting, investigating and prosecuting major drug-related cases and to improve effective implementation of the 1988 Convention at the sub-regional level, UNDCP conducted a Legal Workshop on Sub-regional Cooperation from 28 February to 4 March 1994 at Bangkok, in cooperation with the Colombo Plan Bureau.

The workshop revealed, among other things, promising beginnings to a frank casework-based approach to the problems hindering sub-regional cooperation between judges, prosecutors and investigators. The participants expressed their Governments' willingness to quickly adhere to international drug control conventions and to adopt the necessary enabling laws and regulations, with UNDCP legal assistance.

In addition, the Workshop identified major legal deficiencies at the sub-regional level: a number of countries have no drug control laws, others that have received UNDCP legal assistance are still facing several difficulties in introducing legislation pertaining to the extradition, mutual legal assistance, controlled delivery, confiscation of assets and money laundering. One country unwilling to adopt a law on illicit cultivation at present is seeking a 10-year period of grace.

The participating States also expressed interest in cooperating across the borders. In this context, Cambodia and Viet Nam appeared keen to join the sub-regional Memorandum of Understanding between China, Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and UNDCP signed late in 1993.

In total, 22 investigators, prosecutors and judges from Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam attended. UNDCP provided financial support and technical expertise and the Colombo Plan Bureau handled the administrative and organizational matters.

Training Seminars Stress Action Against Money Laundering

Lawyers and judges from nine States and one territory of the Caribbean attended a training seminar on money laundering organized by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), from 18 to 21 January 1994 at **Fort de France**, Martinique, with financial support from the French Government and UNDCP.

The seminar, which was opened by Dominique Perben, French Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories, focused on model legislation pertaining to the laundering of funds derived from illicit drug traffic in the Caribbean.

The resource persons were provided by the French Inter-Ministerial Drug Control Training Centre, CICAD, UNDCP and the United States of America.

UNDCP is expanding its programme against money laundering and inter-acting with intergovernmental bodies that have expertise in this field.

The Programme was represented by Jean-François Thony, Legal Adviser, Technical Services Branch.

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High-level Indian officials engaged in drug control activities in border areas and metropolitan cities participated in a money laundering course, organized from 10 to 14 January 1994 at the National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics in **New Delhi**, with support from UNDCP. The participants were at the level of Inspector General of Police and Collector of Customs and Central Excise. The resource persons provided by UNDCP were from Canada and the United Kingdom.

In his opening remarks, M.R. Sivaraman Indian Secretary for Revenue, expressed his Government's interest in combating money laundering. The motivation was two-fold: on the one hand, India was liberalizing its economy, on the other, the country was facing a large parallel banking system.

The course provided an opportunity for a frank exchange of information and experience between Indian officials and law enforcement officials from Europe and North America.

It is expected that the momentum generated by this UNDCP-sponsored course will lead to the establishment of special money laundering investigation units within the Indian administration and pro-

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Officials from the Estonian Ministries of Justice and Finance, the Bank of Estonia, the banking sector and law enforcement agencies participated, from 21 to 23 February 1994 at **Tallin**, in a seminar on money laundering organized by the Council of Europe.

The seminar aimed at making Estonian authorities aware of the vulnerability of their country to money laundering activities, the destabilizing effects of such activities on the national economy and the need to protect Estonia through the adoption of measures and penal provisions for preventing and detecting this plague.

A series of presentations on the general features of money laundering, practical cases, international responses and national counter offensives were made by resource persons from the Council of Europe, the Financial Action Task Force, the European Union, UNDCP, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

The UNDCP presentation dealt with the anti-money laundering provisions contained in articles 3 and 5 of the 1988 Convention as well as the model law on money laundering.

Intl. Drug Day

"Women, drug abuse and drug control" is the theme of the 1994 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June).

Andean Journalists Attend Drug Awareness Seminar

A Seminar on Drug Control for Journalists of the Andean Region took place at Quito from 28 February to 2 March 1994, with participation of 20 journalists from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. The seminar was organized by UNDCP in the context of its project Training of Journalists and Awareness Creation on Drug Control, which is executed by the Rome-based Inter-Press Service (IPS).

The opening ceremony was attended by the IPS Chairman, Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Prize winner, as well as by several national authorities.

The project is part of UNDCP strategy to develop an awareness campaign that takes into consideration social, economic and political aspects of the drug abuse phenomenon and informs the public of the initiatives taken internationally to cope with it. In fact, it was felt that from a journalistic point of view, the drug problem in Latin America has too often been treated from a sensationalist perspective. This has conveyed the message that the drugs calamity is a vicious circle out of which there is no escape, resulting in a perpetuation of the problem.

For the last 10 years, the United Nations has endeavoured to assist the Governments of the region to prepare or update their drug control policies. United Nations-supported technical cooperation and technical assistance activities have covered the full range of drug control, from the introduction of alternative development and agricultural projects in coca-growing areas to prevention campaigns through the mass media, treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts, provision of technical equipment and training of law enforcement officials. Although the drug abuse scourge has been a major concern for Latin America, very little is known about the assistance provided by UNDCP in this field.

The project is expected to train a total of 108 journalists from Latin America through country seminars during a period of one year. Prior to the Quito seminar, similar seminars were held in Costa Rica (July 1993) and Brazil (August 1993).

The executing agency for the project, IPS, is an international NGO in the communications field, serving as a news agency in 10 different languages, undertaking projects for the upgrading of communications in developing countries and promoting training, information exchange and the production of news material disseminated worldwide.

Japanese NGO Donates Funds For Drug Demand Reduction

Six Japanese teenagers presented, on 21 March 1994, a US$ 424,000 donation from the Tokyo-based Drug Abuse Prevention Centre (DAPC) to Giorgio Giacomelli, Executive Director of UNDCP. The donation will serve to finance drug demand reduction activities to be undertaken by non-governmental organizations in developing countries.

The six Japanese "Young Ambassadors" are students from elementary and high schools throughout Japan who participated in the DAPC nation-wide drug awareness campaign in 1993. On this occasion, the DAPC received funds as part of Japan's effort to promote the objectives of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse (1991-2000).

In his acceptance remarks, the Executive Director expressed UNDCP's gratitude for the Centre's initiative which was "in line with the Programme's strategy of strengthening links with the civil society". He thanked the Japanese young people for their efforts to help NGOs in need of financial support to fight drug abuse.

Under an agreement signed on 21 January 1994 in Tokyo by the DAPC Chairman of the Board of Directors, Masami Takatsuji, and the UNDCP Executive Director, DAPC will continue to raise funds for the Programme's drug demand reduction activities in developing countries until the year 2000. UNDCP is entrusted with the selection of the activities or projects to be financed, giving priority to prevention activities.

New Publications

UNDCP Field Office in Peru has issued an illustrated publication on the outcome of a meeting held from 26 to 30 January 1994 in Tocache, San Martín, concerning the **process of consolidation of farmers' cooperatives within the context of alternative development programmes in the region of Huallaga, Peru.** It is available in Spanish.

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The Bolivia Field Office has published a **Report for 1993**, which outlines the activities undertaken by UNDCP in **Bolivia**. The Report is available in Spanish.

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The UNDCP Regional Field Office for South-West Asia has published the first issue of its quarterly newsletter ***Pop Up***. The newsletter, which is available in English, covers major developments in the sub-region.

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The External Relations and Public Affairs Unit has published a brochure ***Small Island Developing States and Drug Abuse Control*** (UNDCP/ERPA/1994/1) for the forthcoming United Nations Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, planned for 25 April-6 May 1994 in Barbados. It is first issued in English.

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The ***INCB Report*** for 1993 (E/INCB/1993/1) was released worldwide on 28 February 1994. On this occasion, press conferences, television programmes and other public information activities were held or undertaken in major world cities to draw attention to the salient issues covered in the Report.

The Report is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. It will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which is holding its thirty-seventh session in April 1994.

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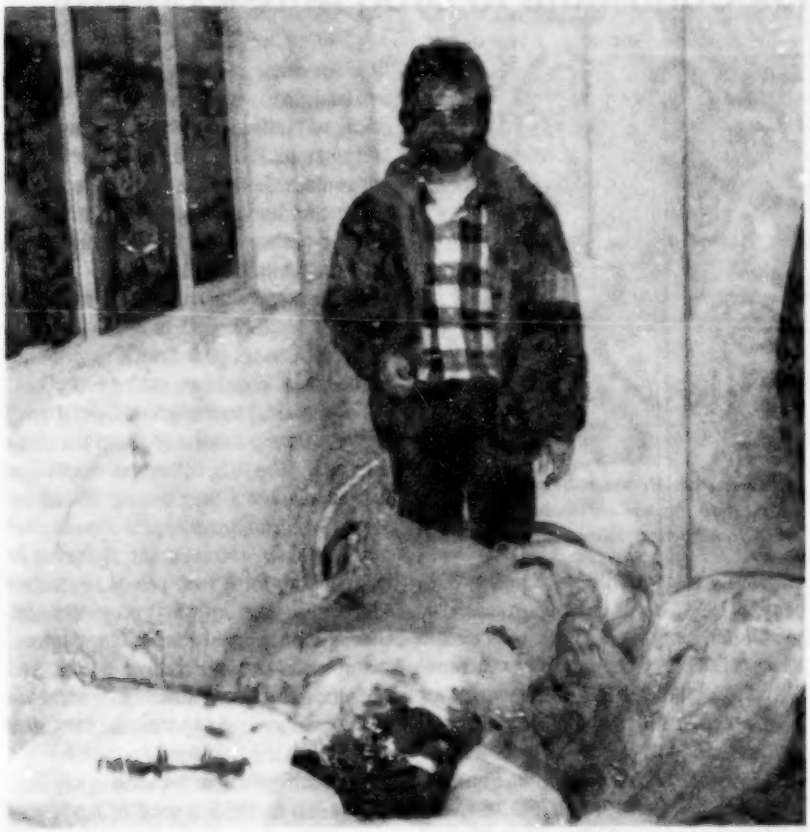
Queries should be addressed to UNDCP/ External Relations and Public Affairs Unit.

Sub-regional Cooperation to Strengthen Drug Interdiction Capacities



Alexander Seger, Assistant Director of the Islamabad-based UNDCP Regional Office for South-West Asia, inspecting 350 kg of opium seized near Mirjawa (Iran) by the Disciplinary Force of Sistan-Baluchistan. The opium had entered Iran in early February 1994 from Afghanistan via Pakistan. Nineteen Afghan carriers were arrested in connection with this case.

The Iran/Pakistan/Afghanistan border areas face one of the worst problems of trafficking, in terms of both quantities of drugs and violence involved, according to a joint Iran/Pakistan/UNDCP mission that visited the provinces of Baluchistan (Pakistan) and Sistan-Baluchistan (Iran), as well as Islamabad and Tehran from 1 to 2 February 1994.

Law enforcement agencies in the Pakistan/Iran border area are faced not only with huge quantities of drugs but also with a most violent form of trafficking involving highly organized trafficking networks and traffickers equipped with sophisticated communication systems and heavy arms. Several hundreds of Iranian law enforcement officers were reportedly killed in this area in 1993.

To help the countries concerned cope with this alarming situation, UNDCP is preparing a project on the basis of recommendations made by its February mission.

First of all, the project will strive to strengthen drug interdiction capacities of law enforcement agencies in Baluchistan and Sistan-Baluchistan through the establishment of drug control units within the Frontier Corps of Baluchistan, through law enforcement training on both sides of the border and through the provision of mobility to border forces.

Secondly, the project will promote improved cooperation in drug control operations between Iranian and Pakistani law enforcement agencies by providing a communication system linking Iranian and Pakistani border posts as well as by developing and implementing operating procedures for cooperation, including the posting of drug liaison officers in border areas.

The Government of Iran pledged more than US$20 million in the form of staff, equipment and construction activities. The Government of Pakistan expressed its readiness to contribute staff, equipment and costs for the maintenance and operation of equipment for about $5.5 million. The mission estimated UNDCP input at $3.8 million.

This project will be the first one evolving from the Sub-regional Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Iran and Pakistan, and UNDCP. It is scheduled to start on 1 July 1994 and expected to last three years.

Myanmar

Project to Help Reduce Illicit Opium cultivation

One of the greatest problems in combating illicit cultivation of opium poppy in Myanmar has been the fact that the main areas under cultivation are not easily accessible.

Late in 1993, however, UNDCP encouraged the Government of Myanmar and the Wa people to consider developing a UNDCP-funded supply reduction project in the Wa area. The Wa live in the northern Shan State and control what may be the largest area of opium poppy in South-East Asia. While no accurate figures are available, it is estimated that several hundred tons of raw opium are being produced in the Wa territory each year.

From 22 to 26 January 1994, a mission headed by Jorn Kristensen, UNDCP Country Director, and consisting of project personnel, UNICEF Deputy Representative and government officials, visited the Wa area to hold talks with local leaders and make a preliminary assessment as to whether the town of Wan Ho Tao could serve as a suitable project site.

The Wa area is one of the most isolated and inaccessible areas of Myanmar with a population of around 300,000 to 400,000 made up of many minority groups. In many ways, its recent past has been influenced more by China than by Myanmar and many such ties still remain.

For over 20 years, the area was controlled by the former Communist Party of Burma (CPB), but, when the CPB collapsed in early 1989, the Myanmar Government quickly signed peace agreements

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Feature stories ..... Feature stories ..... Feature stories

Testing Laboratories Contribute to Drug Abuse Control

"From the outside, there was nothing unusual. The door was like any other door in that area, except that it was locked when I walked through a corridor on the 15th floor of the E building, accompanied by a UNDCP staff member", said Djibril at the door to the narcotics laboratory. Djibril was representing a Sub-Saharan African country at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for the first time.

His 48-hour stay at the Vienna International Centre plunged him into an atmosphere of meetings, contacts, deliberations, behind-the-curtain negotiations, discussions over a cup of coffee or a glass of orange juice which prevails during sessions of the Commission. He was curious, ambitious and full of initiatives. He wanted to know more and to discover whatever can be useful to his country where cannabis abuse is emerging and small quantities of cocaine and heroin have been seized. He had heard about the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and its narcotics laboratory. After reading leaflets, booklets and other material, he requested a visit to the laboratory.

As the lab door opened, Djibril's first impression was a strange one. He never thought that something like that would exist in any part of the United Nations Secretariat: all types of equipment, reagent bottles, test tubes, carboys, flasks with chemicals etc. Surprised, interested? Of course he was: his eyes were shining. Then he asked the most expected questions: "What is this for?" "When was it created?" "Why?" "How can countries like mine benefit from its work?" "Just a minute", said the UNDCP colleague, "I'll tell you all about it".

"This laboratory has a history that goes back to 1954", said the lab colleague. Djibril thought about an African saying: "History is the candle of the past that is in the hands of the present to enlighten the future". "Maybe the experiences and knowledge gained in this field can be instrumental in improving life in my home society tomorrow", he thought.

The narcotics laboratory was established in Geneva pursuant to General

A trainee from Montserrat injecting a drug sample into the gas chromatograph at the UNDCP narcotics laboratory in Vienna.

Assembly resolution 834(IX) of 14 December 1954. It was later incorporated in the United Nations Division of Narcotic Drugs (DND). When DND was transferred to Vienna in 1979 along with other drug-related entities, i.e. the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), the laboratory was installed within its present premises. With the creation of UNDCP in 1991, the lab became part of the Technical Services Branch.

The main objective of the Laboratory Operations, as it is now called, is to help both Member States with limited resources develop their national technical and scientific expertise and relevant institutions which assist law enforcement agencies in their fight against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

In particular, the UNDCP laboratory has established or strengthened drug testing laboratories in many developing countries facing the drug abuse menace. A national laboratory has a key role to play in areas where its support is required: for analysing drugs seized in the illicit traffic, licit pharmaceutical preparations containing controlled substances and biological specimens to detect the presence of drugs of abuse and for determining the dependence potential of a given substance and in medical emergency cases where a rapid and precise analysis can help save a life. In order to function effectively, a national drug testing laboratory requires adequate facilities, appropriate equipment and chemicals, trained and experienced personnel, reference samples of controlled drugs and access to up-to-date testing methods as well as other relevant scientific and technical information.

Djibril was told that UNDCP had developed its technical assistance into a multicomponent programme responding to the above requirements.

In practical terms, asked Djibril, how can a narcotics laboratory help the community? The lab colleague responded that the staff of a drug testing laboratory identify and analyse samples submitted to them by law enforcement agencies or other institutions; they prepare evidence for legal proceedings and provide scientific support to forensic, legislative, therapeutic and preventive action and decisions. Such activities require accuracy and precision so as to prosecute the guilty and protect the innocent.

The lab colleague went on to say that, from 1980 to 1993, a total of 8,571 reference samples of controlled drugs had been distributed to 112 countries; 497 fellows from narcotics laboratories of 117 countries benefitted from the training programme organized by the lab between 1958 and 1993; and narcotics laboratories were established or strengthened in 91 States between 1974 and 1993.

In addition, a few years ago the UNDCP narcotics laboratory developed a field testing kit to help customs and police officers without any special training in this domain to conduct simple tests of any suspected substance in order to make a preliminary seizure, pending a thorough analysis in a full-fledged laboratory. From 1984 to 1993, some 5,350 such kits had been distributed to 127 countries. The UNDCP lab also developed a precursor testing kit, which facilitates the identification and analysis of precursors and essential chemicals used in the manufacture of drugs.

The diversion of these chemicals from licit use to illicit purposes has become a major world concern. From 1991 to 1993,

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A Profile of Bogotá Integrated Demand Reduction Project

It is a vast, rambling, turn-of-the-century house built in the Republican style, of which few examples still remain in Bogotá - a two-storey architectural monument with large, folding windows overlooking the Calle del Palomar del Príncipe, as the sign at the front corner reads. A visitor arriving for the first time might think that no one lives there, not because of its walls, where you can feel a vital energy pulsating in the posters and in the mural in the hallway entrance, but because of the silence.

Does anyone live here? As you climb the heavy wooden staircase leading to the second floor, the impression lingers: Where are the people? Could you imagine that the staff of the Coordination Unit for Integrated Prevention (UCPI) includes 18 psychologists, six social workers, two teachers, two anthropologists, two sociologists, two media officers, two musicians, a psychiatrist, an industrial engineer, a systems programmer, a gymnast, a drama specialist, a handicraft instructor, a translator, a dancer and a magician?

Where are they all?

"They are out working", answers Cristina, the secretary to the management.

Friday, 5 p.m.

Another UCPI-organized "Street Art Friday" is about to begin in the main square of Suba, a district of Bogotá. The basketball court is the setting where theatre groups, dance troupes, puppeteers, folk-dancing groups and musical ensembles, made up of students from local schools, perform to a very varied audience. While attempting to bring art out of doors, this scheme also makes good use of open spaces for the staging of public entertainments.

At the same moment, in a city-centre brothel that has not yet opened its doors to the public, an anthropologist is explaining to a group of prostitutes the correct way to use a condom in order to prevent AIDS, while in the district of Usaquén to the north a group of students from several local schools has just finalized the first issue of its newspaper, evocatively titled *Censored*.

If there is anything about this group of professionals of the social sciences and the arts that attracts attention, it is to see them working alongside countless groups of parents, teachers, leaders and young people from the most varied backgrounds in a venture aimed at opening up channels of expression and interaction in which recreational, emotional, moral and aesthetic elements are combined in a joint effort of cultural construction and reconstruction.

It is a novel working experiment,

whose basic principle is integration. If young people have good relations with their families and society, if they belong to youth organizations and if they use their free time constructively, they will find the right environment for leading a life that is physically and emotionally healthy. This is what is meant by the assertion "prevention is building the future".

A Unit for everyone

Set up by the Bogotá municipal authority, UCPI has been operating since January 1990, during which time it has initiated or directly participated in the implementation of over 100 projects aimed at preventing drug addiction and its associated problems, such as domestic violence, school and job failure, unwanted pregnancies and AIDS.

Noteworthy among its activities are the training of several thousand extension agents in the prevention field, the establishment of youth clubs and community libraries in depressed areas, direct public assistance through a network of information and counselling centres, prevention campaigns in the city's primary and secondary schools, awareness campaigns via the mass media and through regular participation in phone-in radio programmes, technical and logistic support for schemes run by hundreds of civic and youth groups and organizations throughout the city, and the provision of care to population groups in high-risk or crisis situations (street children, people in prison, prostitutes and the destitute). UCPI also organizes and promotes mass events, such as arts festivals, sports competitions, environmental and open-space improvement seminars, civic forums and intersectoral meetings of prevention officers, experts and promoters.

All UCPI's activities receive technical and financial assistance and support from UNDCP, under the agreement concluded between UNDCP and the Bogotá municipal authority.

Since this is an inter-institutional undertaking, other official organs of the city are also involved. These include the Executive Department and Advisory Office for Social Policy of the municipal authority, the Education Department, the Health Department, the Social Welfare Service, the Institute of Culture and Tourism and the Institute of Sport and Leisure.

At the "field-work" level, UCPI's professional staff are to be seen in schools and colleges promoting the establishment of youth organizations, arranging pupil workshops to develop creative skills and educational self-management, or encouraging young people to express themselves through their own channels of communication, such as local newspapers, of which 15 are already in circulation.

They are regularly seen serving on inter-institutional committees of the city's 20 district authorities, coordinating the joint execution of social development projects with other official bodies and non-governmental organizations. They can also be seen in the local communities, meeting leaders or youth groups and parents' groups, promoting the establishment of micro-enterprises, school canteens and tank-farming projects, or providing alternative employment skills training.

Thus, at the UCPI La Candelaria headquarters the staff are rarely to be seen - because they are working.

Text submitted by project staff.

UNDCP Initiative to Help Reduce Myanmar Illicit Opium Poppy Cultivation ...

from page 7

with the various insurgent groups, including the Wa. Even so, it was only in 1992 that there were visible signs that a real working agreement had been reached, which was demonstrated by a symbolic illicit opium poppy field eradication and the destruction of a clandestine laboratory, 163 kg of opium and 56 kg of heroin.

During 1992, the Wa requested UNDCP several times to assist in freeing them from their economic dependence on illicit opium production. In early 1993, they also expressed willingness to work with UNDCP through the Government.

In October 1993, the Government proposed to UNDCP a one-year project on social development assistance and a limited crop substitution programme to be implemented in a selected area on a trial basis. At the same time, a socio-economic survey, baseline studies and other preparatory activities for a full-phase three- to four-year project under the China/Myanmar Narcotics Control Agreement would be carried out.

The field visit to Wan Ho Tao in January 1994 included meetings with high-ranking Wa representatives from their headquarters in Pang Sang, as well as with district officials and a group of villagers in a nearby Lahu village. The mission also visited the Pang Sang market, primary school and hospital as well as the Chinese border.

The Wa leaders expressed their interest in growing crops other than the opium poppy. They were well aware of the harmful effects of the drug, on both their own community and the outside world, but they were also economically dependent on illicit opium cultivation which generates cash income and makes up for the food deficit in the area. Incidentally, the rice production only provides enough food for between three and six months each year.

The Wa people themselves have adopted a drug control programme, the aim of which is to provide food security and improve the overall conditions of the local towns and villages. This programme has led to the shutting down of clandestine laboratories in the region and has contributed to the reduction of opium addiction.

A young farmer collecting opium gum from one of the numerous poppy fields in the Wa area.

While it is a very poor and underdeveloped region, it does have good natural resources: the wide river flowing through the valley could be used to irrigate the nearby fields, and climatic conditions would favour growing a variety of crops. The mission was also told that a number of mineral deposits had been found in the region.

The district being considered for UNDCP assistance is the Ho Tao; the population is about 50,000, made up of over 15 different ethnic groups. The four major tribes are the Lahu, Shan, Wa and Akha, with Lahu serving as the common language. It is estimated that about 11 tons of opium were produced from 400 hectares in the 1992/93 season.

In assessing the potential of Wan Ho Tao for an alternative development project, the mission was of the opinion that the area offered very good conditions. The physical environment appears suitable and the existing administration would provide a good framework for implementing the project.

The close proximity to China means that there is good market access and a convenient source of necessary materials. Even so, there will be difficulties in setting up such a project because of the great cultural variety and the remoteness of the site.

In the long term, with the strong support of the Myanmar Ministry for Progress of Border Area and National Races and Development Affairs, this project could provide the Wa farmers with alternatives to illicit opium poppy cultivation. It may also serve as an incentive to other groups wishing to take similar action.

1991 - 2000
United Nations
Decade against Drug Abuse

Drug Testing Labs ...

from page 8

45 United Nations Precursor Testing Kits had been distributed worldwide, including to developed countries.

Also, a whole range of manuals on methods of analysis and a multilingual dictionary providing names, including vernacular names, of all drugs are available to assist drug law enforcement officers in identifying drugs of abuse when such drugs are described by individuals dealing with them in a disguised way. The dictionary is an additional working tool for officials of customs and related services engaged in the fight against drug trafficking. It also provides information and helps identify controlled drugs among components of pharmaceutical preparations. Under a variety of trade names, such pharmaceutical products are available in legitimate commerce, from where many are diverted to the illicit ma. :t.

Djibril, who is a judge in his home country and therefore had no training in laboratory matters, was given an opportunity to demonstrate his skills by using a field testing kit. By adding drops of chemical reagents to a suspected powder, it turned violet. This was an indication that the powder contained heroin. He received one kit as an incentive to launch initiatives in his home country.

Djibril was then introduced to the Manager of the Laboratory Operations who outlined other activities undertaken by his team and their plans for the future - from environmentally safe methods for eradicating illicit narcotic crops, impurity profiling of drugs seized in the illicit traffic to the recommended methods for the detection and assay of drugs in biological specimens (urine and blood). In a simple style, the Laboratory Manager made the scientific jargon easily digestible for his visitor.

Taking notes and putting written material in a bag he was holding, Djibril gathered as much information as he could. He could not help revealing his satisfaction as he left the laboratory premises: "At least, I know what to suggest to my Minister and how my country can join forces with others in the global fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking".

Sub-regional NGO Consultation Held at Dakar

A partial view of the Dakar NGO consultation held in January 1994. Facing the audience (from left) are Anthony Buckingham, Director of the UNDCP Office in Nigeria; Christian Brulé, member of the World Forum Management Committee; Flavius Roversi, External Relations and Public Affairs Unit, UNDCP; His Excellency Mr. Djibo Ka, Senegal Minister of Interior; Didier Hardy, then Director of the Abidjan-based UNDCP Regional Office for West Africa.

The fourth in a series of six regional consultations of non-governmental organizations being organized by UNDCP in preparation of the 1994 World Forum on the Role of NGOs in Drug Demand Reduction took place from 18 to 19 January 1994 at Dakar. Representatives of NGOs from 17 Central and Western African States participated. The consultation was opened by Djibo Ka, Interior Minister of Senegal.

Discussions in working groups led to the formulation of a list of priority issues proposed for consideration at the World Forum, including the methodology of intervention; research and assessment of the extent of drug abuse; identification of target groups; matters pertaining to legislation; development choices; structural adjustment programmes; fund raising and training of staff.

Like the NGOs which participated in the previous three consultations, West and Central African NGOs underlined the need to strengthen the structure of NGOs and to establish a mechanism for facilitating the exchange of information and contributing to improvements in the quality of projects.

Emphasis was put on preventive education in schools and the community. Identifying young people, in particular street children, as a population group at risk, the consultation recalled that the drug abuse situation in Africa was strictly related to economic, political and social instability.

The resource persons included Christian Brulé, Management Committee of the Forum; Didier Hardy, UNDCP Regional Director for West Africa; Christiane D'Almeida, Regional Director for Central Africa; Anthony Buckingham, Country Director for Nigeria; and staff of the External Relations and Public Affairs Unit and the Demand Reduction Section, Technical Services Branch.

Attending the consultation were NGOs from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

In addition, two regional consultations are planned from 28 to 29 March 1994 at Cairo, for NGOs from Arabic-speaking countries and from 24 to 25 May 1994 at Vienna, for European NGOs.

The World Forum is scheduled to be held from 12 to 16 December 1994 at Bangkok.

Calendar of Events

Government authorities, agencies and bodies within the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as research and other specialized associations are invited to forward to the Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria. Information on forthcoming meetings relating to international drug control. Basic data on international events will be published as appropriate in the UNDCP's Information Letter, which is distributed worldwide. This information is intended to assist entities within the United Nations system, as well as other concerned organizations, in scheduling meetings, exchanging results and enhancing coordination. The timely receipt of comprehensive information on planned events will be appreciated and will greatly assist in the preparation of Calendars of Events.

1994
United Nations System

18-22 April	WHO: Meeting on Street Children and Psychoactive Substances - Innovation and Cooperation.	Geneva
25 April - 6 May	United Nations: Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States.	Bridgetown
28 April	UNDCP: Mayor's Conference "European Cities against Drugs".	Stockholm
9-19 May	International Narcotics Control Board, 56th session.	Vienna
10 May	NGO Committee on Narcotics and Substance Abuse.	New York
10-13 May	UNDCP: Expert Forum on Demand Reduction.	São Paulo, Brazil
18-20 May	UNDCP: North American Meeting of NGOs.	New York
24-25 May	UNDCP: European Regional Consultation in Preparation for the 1994 World Forum of NGOs in Drug Demand Reduction.	Vienna
30 May - 3 June	UNDCP: Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Latin America and the Caribbean.	Santo Domingo
14 June	NGO Committee on Narcotics and Substance Abuse.	New York
26 June	**International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**	
27 June - 1 July	UNDCP: Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Africa.	Addis Ababa
27 June - 29 July	Economic and Social Council, regular session.	New York
5-7 September	Administrative Committee on Coordination: Sub-Committee on Drug Control.	Vienna
19-23 September	UNDCP: Working Group on Illicit Maritime Traffic.	Vienna
31 October - 17 November	International Narcotics Control Board, 57th session.	Vienna
14-18 November	UNDCP: Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Asia and the Pacific.	Wellington, New Zealand
12-16 December	UNDCP: 1994 World Forum on the Role of NGOs in Drug Demand Reduction.	Bangkok